

## MINUTES

### MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 51st LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

#### COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Call to Order: By Chairman Ted Schye, on January 4, 1989, at  
3:00 p.m.

#### ROLL CALL

Members Present: All

Members Excused: None

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Andrea Merrill, Legislative Council Researcher

Announcements/Discussion: None

#### HEARING ON HB 14

#### Presentation and Opening Statement by Sponsor:

John Cobb, District 42, stated the purpose of the bill was to change the sponsorship and guidance of the Fire Services Training School from the Board of Public Education to the Board of Regents. Rep. Cobb said the major responsibility of the Board of Public Education is to the K-12 system, not to the Training School and that, administratively, the Board cannot offer a great deal of support due to its limited staff. He also stated the Board of Regents and the University units have access to greater administrative and clerical staffs and the Regents and the Training School have common objectives in that they both teach post-secondary students.

#### Testifying Proponents and Who They Represent:

Ted Hazelbaker, Member - Board of Public Education and Chairman,  
Fire Services Training School Sub-Committee  
Butch Weedon, Director, Fire Services Training School  
Bruce Suenram, Chief Executive Officer, Missoula Rural Fire  
District and member, Fire Services Training School  
Board  
Carroll Krause, Commissioner of Higher Education  
Lyle Nagel, Secretary/Treasurer, Montana State Firefighters  
Association  
Ross Fitzgerald, Chairman, Power Volunteer Fire Department,  
Power, MT  
Eric Feaver, Montana Education Association, MEA

Proponent Testimony:

Ted Hazelbaker expressed support for HB 14 on behalf of the Board of Public Education. Mr. Hazelbaker said this bill was the culmination of four years of discussion to find a home for the Fire Services Training School when it became apparent the school could be much better served by another sponsor with more adequate staff and time to offer. The Board felt that given its full agenda of general K-12 educational issues along with the School for the Deaf and Blind, it was not possible to provide the necessary services and resources that the Fire Services Training School needed and deserved. It was agreed by the Board that the Regents that an administrator of Mr. Weedon's ability, could work out an arrangement to best serve the 7,200 volunteers and 400 paid members providing fire services in Montana. Mr. Hazelbaker also added the general consensus that the Regent's staff and Mr. Weedon would also be capable of developing plans to better serve the 445 non-staff field instructors and to more adequately oversee the 2,000 item library. Mr. Hazelbaker closed his comments by stressing that the Fire Services Training School is an important agency deserving the sponsorship the Board of Regents could offer.

Bruce Weedon, (EXHIBIT 1.)

Bruce Suenram spoke in support of HB 14 upon Advisory Board recommendation of sponsorship of the Fire Services Training School by the Board of Regents because it was an adult educational system.

Carrol Krause expressed willingness to accept the administration of the Fire Services Training School. He also said it was very compatible with the goals of higher education and expressed desire to continue the fine efforts the school made in the past.

Lyle Nagel urged support for HB 14 in light of all previously mentioned reasons.

Ross Fitzgerald stated that after working with the Board on this issue over the past four years, he agreed with the recommendation to move sponsorship to the Regents. He also reported that various state volunteers and chiefs in many Montana fire districts supported sponsorship by the Board of Regents.

Eric Feaver stood in support of HB 14.

Testifying Opponents and Who They Represent:

None

Opponent Testimony:

None

Questions From Committee Members: None

Closing by Sponsor: Rep. Cobb thanked the Education Committee and requested support in passage of HB 14.

DISPOSITION OF HB 14

Motion: Rep. Dan Harrington made the motion that HB 14 DO PASS and be placed on the consent calendar if passed by unanimous committee vote.

Discussion: Rep. Fritz Daily stated even though there was a great deal of support for HB 14 he had reservations about putting more responsibilities on the Board of Regents.

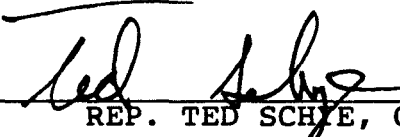
Rep. Phillips asked for explanation of the consent calendar. It was explained this was a method to shorten debate on the floor and that the bill would skip second reading and go directly to third.

Amendments, Discussion, and Votes: None

Recommendation and Vote: Motion Rep. Harrington that HB 14 DO PASS CARRIED upon unanimous voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment At: 3:45 p.m.

  
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REP. TED SCHIE, Chairman

TS/dlm

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# DAILY ROLL CALL

EDUCATION & CULTURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE

DATE January 4, 1989

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
Rep. Ted Schye, Chairman	X		
Rep. Fritz Daily, Vice-Chairman	X		
Rep. Vicki Cocchiarella	X		
Rep. Paula Darko	X		
Rep. Ervin Davis	X		
Rep. Ralph Eudaily	X		
Rep. Floyd Gervais	X		
Rep. Bill Glaser	X		
Rep. Dan Harrington	X		
Rep. John Johnson	X		
Rep. Tom Kilpatrick	X		
Rep. Richard Nelson	X		
Rep. John Phillips	X		
Rep. Richard Simpkins	X		
Rep. Wilbur Spring, Jr.	X		
Rep. Barry "Spook" Stang	X		
Rep. Fred Thomas	X		
Rep. Norm Wallin	X		
Rep. Diana Wyatt	X		
Rep. Tom Zook	X		

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

January 4, 1989

Page 1 of 1

Mr. Speaker: We, the committee on Education and Cultural Resources report that House Bill 14 (first reading copy -- white) do pass ;and place on consent calendar.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ted Schye, Chairman

# FACT SHEET - THE MONTANA FIRE TRAINING PROGRAM

EXHIBIT # 1  
DATE 1-4-89  
HB 14 Cobb

Legislative mandate: (Section 20-31-103 MCA)

The purpose of the fire services training school is to:

- (1) provide fire service personnel with professional training;
- (2) identify new methods of fire prevention and suppression and disseminate information about them;
- (3) provide a resource center for use by local fire service;
- (4) provide testing and certification for personnel and apparatus; and
- (5) coordinate fire services training in the state.

Mission: The Fire Services Training School (FSTS) Staff and Advisory Council have developed the following mission statement -

"To educate and train the fire service of Montana to meet or exceed all existing or future standards adopted by the Fire Service Training Advisory Council."

## Philosophy:

To serve the educational leadership needs of a diverse adult population of fire service personnel in every community in Montana.

## Audience Served:

Adults with diverse needs in every community in Montana, 95% of which are volunteers.

## Delivery Of Services:

Support local and regional fire training organizations.

Transfer resources using a variety of media through FSTS resource center.

Train local fire service trainers.

Fire service information and research transfer to the local level.

Foster and enhance fire service leaders at the local level.

## Locations:

FSTS programs are 100% outreach.

FSTS services available to organizations and individuals in every community.

FSTS cooperates with and supports local and regional training organizations.

Cost: \$199,392 per year (General Fund)

## Staff: 1 Director

1 Administrative Assistant

2 Logistics Officers

1 Operations Officer

## Impact:

FSTS operates one of only 16 nationally accredited professional certification programs for fire service personnel.

FSTS serves as the state and local link to national clearinghouses for education resource and research information transfer.

FSTS has had contact with 4793 fire service personnel in 456 organizations during the 88 fiscal year.

# **A PROPOSAL TO PLACE THE FIRE SERVICES TRAINING SCHOOL UNDER THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Prepared by:  
Seldon S. Weedon, Director  
Fire Services Training School

## **BACKGROUND**

### **THE PROBLEM**

The Fire Services Training School (FSTS) is an agency of State government whose mission is taking technical advances in fire protection to local fire services. This mission is accomplished through three programs including; 1) the direct and indirect delivery, through outreach, of training and education courses, 2) professional certification of personnel, and 3) a resource library loan program. The FSTS has a Staff of 5 FTE, 445 non-staff field instructors, an annual budget of \$212,000, a 2,000 item resource library, and several mobile training labs. Offices are located in the Great Falls Vocational-Technical Center.

A fire training program has existed in State government in various forms for 30 years. The FSTS has been responsible to the Board of Public Education (BOPE) since Legislative action removed it from the Great Falls Vo-Tech/Office of Public Instruction sponsorship in 1977. The FSTS programs provide service to only postsecondary, adult audiences, whereas, the BOPE is responsible for primary and secondary education.

Like the Regents, the BOPE is a lay Board. Unlike the Regents, the BOPE has a professional staff of only one. Staff limitations have prevented the BOPE from providing administrative support services to the FSTS. The responsibility for meeting all the requisites to function as a state agency has fallen on the FSTS staff. This results in a disproportionate percentage of time being spent on administrative matters.

A performance audit conducted by the Office of the Legislative Auditor on the FSTS in 1985 reported that "With current training resources, these classes are only able to reach 15 - 20 percent of the State's fire fighters annually." The same Report pointed out that more than 21% of Montana's fire departments had received no formal training from any source in the previous two years. The situation has not significantly changed since the Report was published. One must question the adequacy of training provided Montana's emergency response personnel given the facts stated in this Report. What can be said of the quality of service provided taxpayers by local fire services, if the quantity of training is so lacking?

The Report went on to address administrative sponsorship of the FSTS. Its authors concluded that the BOPE was not a feasible sponsor for the School. Listed among feasible sponsors for the School were the University System, the Department of Vocational Education Services (OPI), the Department of State Lands, and the Department of Justice.

Various units of the University System as well as many of the State's fire fighters have demonstrated an interest in higher education. A certificate program or associates degree program has been advocated. The BOPE is generally uncomfortable with FSTS pursuing such goals because of potential conflict with the role of the Regents. The audience for such advanced

education in the fire service is relatively small but important. Such programs, if implemented should supplement current activities, not supplant them.

## **WHO ARE THOSE WITH AN INTEREST?**

The fire service in Montana consists of some 7,600 members, only 400 of which are salaried. Members are organized in municipal fire departments, volunteer fire companies, fire districts, private fire brigades and a small number of other organizational forms. There is a great deal of diversity in the scope of operations between organizational units. The more sophisticated and proactive are involved in code enforcement, fire investigation, hazardous materials, emergency medical service, and public fire safety education. Others only respond to fires when summoned. The largest organization has over 100 employees, a multi-million dollar budget and apparatus and facilities worth several million dollars. The smallest may consist of a rancher with a grass fire outfit capable of dealing with only the smallest of wildfires. All of these individuals and organizations have an interest in quality training and are recipients of the services from the Fire Services Training School.

The Fire Services Training School has 445 field instructors who deliver the bulk of training to local fire organizations. These instructors rely on FSTS for new technology, administrative support, resources, and professional development. These instructors maintain their competencies through inservice training offered by FSTS.

The public has the greatest interest. With well trained, competent fire services, the public is more secure from the various threats which are dealt with daily by the fire service. A fire service which is 94% volunteer and trained to an acceptable level of competence is perhaps the most cost effective public service the taxpayer receives.

The Board of Public Education has an interest in expending all of their time and energies on issues which relate to elementary and secondary education. The movement of FSTS organizationally to another entity will assist the Board in meeting its constitutional responsibilities.

The Fire Service Training Advisory Council has an interest in seeing that the fire training program continues to move forward and remains highly responsive to fire service needs.

The Legislature has an interest in seeing that citizens receive the best value in public services for their tax dollar. A local fire chief recently told a Legislative Committee, "The Fire Services Training School is the glue that holds the fire service together." The FSTS serves as a catalyst which keeps local fire service organizations viable.

The staff of the Fire Services Training School has an interest in job security and a stable work environment. The staff would rather spend time on program delivery than administrative work.

## **GIVEN THE PROBLEM: WHY IS A MOVE TO THE REGENTS THE BEST OPTION?**

The Fire Services Training School is a statewide outreach postsecondary education and training program. The Regents constitutionally are charged with responsibility for such programs. The FSTS Advisory Council has studied the options listed in the Legislative Auditor's Report cited earlier and concluded that if a change is to be made, the best option is the University System. The University System has the administrative support which is needed by FSTS to maximize program efficiency.

The University System has the academic expertise to take the FSTS program to new levels of effectiveness. The System has in place outreach programs for adult education which address local community needs. State level fire training programs with national reputations for effectiveness are, in every case, a part of a university.

Flathead Community College, Missoula Vo-Tech Center, Dawson Community College, the College of Great Falls, and Miles City Community College have all demonstrated an interest in providing Fire Science education in cooperation with FSTS to meet the needs of their local fire services. FSTS has in the past, been a cooperator in an Associate Degree program at the College of Great Falls. Miles City Community College is currently conducting courses in fire science with indirect assistance from FSTS. The University System has facilities in many locations where FSTS delivers current courses. FSTS would be in a better position to cooperate with all these institutions if it were a part of the University System.

### **WHAT OPTIONS EXIST FOR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE UNDER THE REGENTS?**

There may be many options for incorporation under the Regents. Three which seem both obvious and practical are:

1. The Fire Services Training School would become a program of the Great Falls Vo-Tech Center.
2. The Fire Services Training School would become affiliated with the MSU Extension Service.
3. The Fire Services Training School would become an institute affiliated with Northern Montana College.

### **ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES**

Under each option, FSTS could remain housed in the Great Falls Vo-Tech Center. This would eliminate cost for relocating staff and operations. Under each option, a large share of administrative workload would be absorbed by the new sponsor, allowing FSTS to increase productivity. The cost for this transfer of administrative work is known to be approximately \$4400 if the Extension Service is selected. It is not known in the other two options.

Under each option, access to resources (classroom, satellite dish, etc.) at the Vo-Tech could be maintained, however, there may be additional cost if the Extension Service or Northern is selected.

Under Northern or the Vo-Tech, FSTS could become a regional program or at least perceived in that context. The Extension Service is readily recognized as a statewide operation with a non-formalized educational program.

Funding for FSTS would be distinct under the Extension Service and Northern, but not under the Vo-Tech.

The Vo-Tech and Northern operate primarily in the traditional mode for the delivery of education. The Extension Service operates in the outreach mode and offers a variety of services which are not academic. FSTS operates in precisely the same mode.

The Extension Service and FSTS make extensive use of unsalaried and volunteer instructors.

Under each option, FSTS would gain access to staff specialists who could support the FSTS programs. Under Extension, these staff specialists could be used to inservice FSTS field instructors at their remote locations.

Extension supervises many offices in remote locations and is structured to do so effectively. Northern also operates a few off campus programs.

Under Extension, the potential exists to develop fire training facilities at decentralized sites throughout the State. Such facilities are badly needed by local fire services and could be developed at experiment station sites in cooperation with local or regional organizations.

The Extension Service has agents in each county which could be utilized to disseminate information for FSTS and provide a focal point for local fire service contact. Nothing similar exists with Northern or the Vo-Tech.

## ISSUES

### SPACE FOR OPERATION:

Leaving FSTS at the Vo-Tech Center will require that the space issue be resolved. This issue needs to be addressed by the Legislature. Ideally, funding should be restored to the FSTS budget so that FSTS could negotiate for space, and its budget reflect the true cost of operations. FSTS has received approval to submit to the Legislature a request for an additional proprietary assignment of \$8400 to lease additional space for operations. Negotiations have been started with the City of Great Falls to lease a portion of their Fire Training Center.

### LINE ITEM BUDGET:

FSTS should endeavor to maintain its current position as a line item budget appropriation. This will:

1. Specifically identify the level of program desired by the Legislature.
2. Prevent "appropriation" of resources by either the Vo-Tech, Northern or Extension Service.
3. Protect either Vo-Tech, Northern or Extension from having to use their appropriated monies to maintain FSTS services at a level beyond that which is funded by the Legislature.

## SUMMARY

The Fire Services Training School should be organizationally relocated from the Board of Public Education to the Regents. The Extension Service, Great Falls Vo-Tech or Northern each has the ability to improve the operation of FSTS. At this time the Extension Service seems to offer the option because of similarity of operation and audience. A change of sponsorship could be accomplished without a change in geographic location. The space issue needs to be addressed by the Legislature.

## VISITORS' REGISTER

## EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

BILL NO. HB 14DATE January 4, 1989SPONSOR COBB

NAME (please print)	RESIDENCE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE
Lyle P. Nayel	Mt. St. Vol. Firefighters Assn Simms Mt.	✓	
Henry E. Lohr	Mt. St. Vol. Fire Fighters ASSN	X	
Butch Weedon	Fire Training	✓	
Bruce Spensman	Missoula Rural FD	✓	
Red Hightaker	Board of Public Ed	✓	
Claudia H. Morton	Board of Public Ed	✓	
Antony Campanelli	Intern Board of Pub Ed	✓	
<del>Reggy Guthrie</del>	<del>Chateau, MT</del>	<del>undecided</del>	
Ross H. FITZGERALD	Power VFC - Power, MT	X	
<del>Joe Williams</del>	<del>OBPA</del>		
Carol Krauss	Comm of H. ED.	X	
Eric Dean	Helena MEA	✓	

IF YOU CARE TO WRITE COMMENTS, ASK SECRETARY FOR WITNESS STATEMENT FORM.

PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.